NHS Grampian

Meeting:	NHS Grampian Board Meeting
Meeting date:	14 August 2025
Item Number:	6
Title:	Operational Improvement Plan Update Report
Responsible Executive:	Alex Stephen, Director of Finance
Report Author:	Preston Gan, Head of Performance

1   Purpose and recommendations

This is presented to the Committee for:

- Assurance
- Decision
- Endorsement

Recommendations

The Board is asked to:

- **Note**
    – Note this update as a baseline for ongoing monitoring of progress against delivery of the Operational Improvement Plan (OIP) priorities
- **Endorse**
    – endorse the prioritisation of delivery of the OIP priorities by NHS Grampian and that they will be the included in the revised Board How Are We Doing report for the remainder of 2025/26, as a strengthened reporting framework to enhance future assurance.

This report relates to:

- Operational Improvement Plan (OIP)

This aligns to the following NHS Scotland quality ambition(s):

- Safe
- Effective
- Person Centred

This subject matter of this report is relevant to the mitigation of the following strategic risks (further information provided in the Risk section below)

- Inability to meet population demand for Planned Care
- Significant delays in the delivery of Unscheduled Care
- Inability to effectively maintain and invest in NHS Grampian's infrastructure
- Deviation from recognised service standards of practice and delivery
- Inability to achieve the aspirations set out in Plan for the Future due to financial resource constraints and inefficiencies
- Inability to reduce demand through citizen engagement

- Insufficient change and innovation to create a system which can meet demand and deliver on our strategic intent
- Deteriorating Workforce Engagement
- Worsening health in Grampian particularly in those who experience multiple disadvantages

2   Report summary

2.1   Situation
This paper provides an update on NHS Grampian's progress across the four priority areas set out by the Scottish Government within the Operational Improvement Plan (OIP), to be delivered over the next 12–18 months and supported by increased investment through the 2025–26 Scottish Budget. It also includes the most recently available performance data against the national access targets (4 hour waiting time, 31 and 62 day cancer performance, Treatment Time Guarantee (TTG) and out-patient performance etc), allocated to the most appropriate OIP element.

This report consolidates content previously presented to the Board in two separate updates in June 2025. It is therefore a mix of reporting formats and update styles. Future reporting on performance against the OIP priorities will be incorporated into the revised Board Assurance Framework and HAWD Report, which is the subject of a separate paper on this agenda, and will have a more consistent reporting format to strengthen performance assurance and improve the clarity of the information provided.

2.2   Background
The OIP was published in March 2025 with the intention to progress reform to ensure long-term sustainability, reduce health inequalities, further harness the benefits of digital technology, and improve population health outcomes in Scotland. The link to the Operational Improvement Plan can be found here: Operational Improvement Plan.

The Chief Executive Team reviewed a mapping exercise carried out for the OIP priorities to understand NHS Grampian's current actions on these priorities i.e. what is already underway, what is planned and gaps. The Chief Executive Team agreed that continued focus is required on the OIP priorities to deliver the desired outcomes by the SG target dates, and that performance reporting would also prioritise these issues, to ensure organisational focus and provide assurance about delivery.

NHS Board Chairs were requested to incorporate OIP progress as part of the Board performance reporting. In response to this, reports were presented to the Board on 12th June 2025 and on the 27th June 2025 and the Board Assurance Framework has been revised to take account of the need to provide comprehensive reporting on the OIP to the Board, the public and Scottish Government.

2.3   Assessment
This report provides an update on NHS Grampian's progress to the OIP's four critical areas:
- Improving access to treatment.
- Shifting the balance of care.
- Improving access to health and social care services through digital and technological innovation.
- Prevention – ensuring we work with people to prevent illness and more proactively meet their needs.

Current performance is presented through narrative submissions from operational teams. Where relevant, current performance data against the national access targets is also included.

The information presented has been drawn from the OIP mapping exercise, which was the only available and accessible source within the limited timeframe for preparing this report. However, the mapping exercise was not originally designed for this specific purpose. As such, this report represents an interim position, developed in consultation with the Chief Executive Team (CET), and produced in the absence of a more targeted data collection process.

Looking ahead, future reporting will be incorporated into a revised Board How Are We Doing report and will provide a clearer picture of what we are trying to achieve by 31st March 2026. For deliverables that are data-driven, we will show whether we are on or off track. For project-based topics, we will use a simple status update approach to track progress. Both formats will provide assurance on the actions being taken if progress is behind, and what's being done to maintain performance where things are going well.

Performance trajectories and agreed targets

In respect of planned care performance, NHS Grampian has agreed local targets to be achieved by March 2026 with Scottish Government and funding has been awarded on the basis of performance on trajectory to achieve those local targets. The performance reporting in Appendix 1 for OIP priorities in cancer (item 1), cancer diagnostics (item 2), improving access to treatment (outpatients and treatment time guarantee performance) (item 21) shows performance against the trajectory to achieve the local target, not the national OIP target. NHS Grampian is on target against all the trajectories agreed with Scottish Government and the weekly run rate of activity is consistent with delivering the target agreed with Scottish Government. There are weekly variations in performance against trajectory but these are not material to the delivery of the target set by the agree date.

In order to close the gap between the local target agreed with Scottish Government and the national target, NHS Grampian has developed plans which can be implemented rapidly if additional funding is provided. This has been done in respect of an additional £750 000 of funding allocated to waiting list initiatives that have enabled us to reduce the Outpatient waiting list and see 2000 additional patients. In addition, the OIP report in Appendix 2 refers to some efficiency initiatives being developed to further improve our utilisation of existing outpatient capacity.

In respect of the unscheduled care plan, as part of NHS Grampian's approach to improving unscheduled care we have been developing a revised whole system plan and received supportive feedback from SG policy teams. The Assurance Board, like NHS Grampian, recognise that unscheduled care performance is not acceptable and we all agree it requires prioritisation for immediate action. The Assurance Board has proved support through experts reviewing the plan, and a revised whole system plan will be presented to the Assurance Board in mid-August.

2.3.1   Quality / Patient Care
This report includes information on elements required to achieve high quality, patient focused care, including waiting times, patient flow, diagnosis, finance, and workforce.

2.3.2   Workforce
This report includes performance elements indirectly relating to workforce.

2.3.3   Financial
Financial issues that may impact on the likelihood of delivery of the SG outcomes is detailed where applicable in the individual topic areas.

2.3.4 Risk Assessment / Management

Risks and risk management are addressed in the narrative impact section; this is however not comprehensive.

2.3.5 Equality and Diversity, including health inequalities

Equality and diversity factors are being included in this report, around GIRFE and Frailty.

2.3.6 Other impacts

All are outlined above and in attached report.

2.3.7 Communication, involvement, engagement and consultation

As previously noted, this report has been compiled at short notice using limited resources.

- SG published OIP March 2025
- Completion of OIP mapping exercise to support draft ADP review and approval, consulted with CET 27th May 2025
- NHS Grampian Chair request to compile report, after meeting of NHS Board Chairs and NHS Scotland COO, with a short list of OIP topic areas.
- Q4 and EoY HAWD report including the shortlisted OIP topic areas, presented to the Board on 12th June 2025
- Identification and reporting of remaining OIP topics to Board 27th June 2025

2.3.8 Route to the Meeting

This has been previously considered by the Chair of NHS Grampian. They have supported the content and their feedback has informed the development of the content presented in this interim report.

2.4 Recommendations

The Board is asked to:

- **Note**
  - Note this update as a baseline for ongoing monitoring of progress against delivery of the Operational Improvement Plan (OIP) priorities
- **Endorse**
  - endorse the prioritisation of delivery of the OIP priorities by NHS Grampian and that they will be the included in the revised Board How Are We Doing report for the remainder of 2025/26, as a strengthened reporting framework to enhance future assurance.

3 Appendix

The following appendix is included with this report:

- Appendix 1 – Operational Improvement Plan Update Report August 2025